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In the claims:

Cancel claims 1-16 and add new claims 17-29.

17. (New) An electronic document answering machine comprising:

an interconnected CPU, memory and modem with a telephone connection;

a system for communicating stored documents to a user;

an alert for signaling a user that new documents are waiting to be reviewed;

an input for a user to signal the system to communicate the new documents to the user; and

a digital communication link for connecting to a host personal computer (PC),

wherein the electronic document answering machine periodically connects to remote sources, receives and stores digital documents, and activates the alert apparatus as new documents are stored, and wherein, in response to the input, the electronic document answering machine communicates stored documents one-at-a-time to the user, and wherein the electronic document answering machine is adapted to communicate stored documents to the PC for processing.

18. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 17 wherein the system for communicating stored documents comprises a speaker and voice synthesis apparatus.

19. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 17 wherein the system for communicating stored documents comprises a display apparatus.

20. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 17 adapted for use by the PC as a modem.

21. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 17 wherein the modem is

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operated by the CPU and has no separate CPU.

22. (New) The electronic document answering machine as in claim 17 wherein the remote sources include an Internet mail server, and downloaded documents include e-mail addressed to a particular user.

23. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 17 wherein the alert apparatus is an LED and the input is a pushbutton having the LED integrated in the pushbutton.

24. (New) The electronic document answering machine of claim 23 further comprising a second pushbutton adapted for applying and removing power to power-using elements.

25. (New) An electronic document answering system in a personal computer (PC), comprising:

- a retriever for periodically accessing remote sources and retrieving and storing digital documents;

- an LED alert apparatus for signaling a user that one or more new documents have been retrieved and stored and are ready for review; and

- an initializing input pushbutton having the LED integrated in the pushbutton, for a user to signal the system to communicate the stored documents one-at-a-time for review by the user;

- wherein the system is adapted to operate using CPU and memory elements of the PC with special operating code provided for the system, and to operate during periods of time the PC is in reduced-power power as well as when the PC is in full operating mode.

26. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the digital documents include e-mail addressed to the PC user.

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27. (New) The system of claim 25 wherein the alert apparatus and the pushbutton are in a keyboard in communication with the PC.

28. (New) The system of claim 27 wherein the alert apparatus is an LED in a standard keyboard adapted to serve as the alert apparatus, and the input apparatus is a standard key on the keyboard adapted to serve as the pushbutton.

29. (New) An electronic document answering machine for use with a TV set, comprising:
an interconnected CPU, memory and modem;
an alert for signaling a user that new documents are waiting to be reviewed;
at least one of an audio and a video output port; and
an infra-red port for receiving infra-red signals from a remote controller;
wherein the CPU, executing stored control code, periodically connects to remote sources, and downloads and stores digital documents, and activates the alert apparatus as new documents are stored, and wherein the CPU in response to input from a user via the infra-red port, communicates stored documents one-at-a-time to a TV set via the audio/video output port.